

GARDEN COLOR MAGIC

By Beth Kerr

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Color inspires us in our everyday lives. It creates mood, excitement and reflects our individuality in our home decor and in our gardens. The rose garden is an outward expression of our enjoyment and love of nature, with its broad spectrum of color. Like a magnet, we are drawn to the color of a rose, because of its visual appeal. Modern hybridizers have increased the palette of rose colors available to the gardener, giving us a seemingly endless array of color choices.

Old roses, or heritage roses, were somewhat limited in their colors, being composed mainly of solids in white, pink, lavender, red and striped. Modern roses offer the varied selection of solid color roses, bi-colored (different color on the inside and outside of petals) or blends (two or more colors intermingled on each petal) giving us more versatility for color impact in the garden.

Flower color is one of the most important factors in selecting roses. It creates a lasting impression upon all who visit your garden. A warm color scheme composed of red, orange, gold and yellow tones creates an exciting, cheerful and happy look. It draws the eye, but makes the garden appear smaller and warmer. However, this may not be a good choice if summers are hot. A cool color scheme is composed of whites and pastel pinks with violet accents. This is an excellent choice for a relaxing, quiet garden. When planning a garden, it is a good idea to limit the color scheme, thereby avoiding a busy, distracting look. Choose one color as the dominant hue and add several complementary colors as subordinates. In time, and with experience, you will be able to add more color without creating discord.

Monochromatic harmony is a color scheme that uses shades and tones of a single hue. An example of this would be the use of pink, light pink, medium pink and deep pink. The paler pinks offer a more cooling effect in the garden than darker pinks and red. This creates a feeling of openness and makes a garden appear larger. White is the absence of pigment and can be used as the dominant color or as a buffer between bright colors. When white is used along the border of a bed of multicolored roses, it can have a unifying effect. Pink and light pastels have a brightening effect, enhancing a garden for evening viewing. The light colors shine forth, whereas, the darker colors fade into the background. White roses planted here and there can create a spotted look, and so are best planted in groups of three or more or in masses for bed or border. Strongly colored roses are excellent for accenting garden focal points such as a trellis, garden statuary, pond or birdbath. By repeating a strong color elsewhere, in other beds, the eye is carried along fluidly throughout the garden.

Many rosarians like to grow many different varieties and shades of roses for garden and for exhibition. To avoid a jumbled look, it is best to give some thought to color placement. Masses of the same variety give the impression of abundance and unification of color. Two or three roses of the same color also help to unify. Groups of low growing floribundas can create large patches of sustained color for visual impact. Colors that are the opposite of each other are called complementary. These colors make a strong statement in the garden and create harmony. For instance, a violet-red and yellow would be a possible choice. Harmony can be created by using two or three colors with the same base color such as yellow, yellow-orange and orange. By placing two strongly colored roses together, a dramatic look can be obtained. An example might be the use of a bright pink with orange or red. The eye is immediately drawn to such a dazzling combination, so it should be used carefully. By placing solids next to bi-colors, each is shown off

to its best advantage. An assortment of blends together causes their individual color characteristics to be lost.

When planting roses, take time to consider the coloring of the wall, house or fence against which your roses will be displayed. Yellow and white roses provide contrast to a brick structure and red or orange roses are dramatic against a white house. The rose shades of pink, apricot and yellow look well against a weathered fence or barn.

There are simply no set rules for choosing color combinations in the garden. The beauty of natural colors in a sunset or a rainbow might serve as an inspiration. Whatever your choice, feel confident in selecting what is right for you, but most importantly, enjoy the colorful beauty of your rose garden.

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